

Dragon's Wagon plans 29th year

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Dragon's Wagon Preschool, located in Holyoke Elementary School, will kick off its 29th year Tuesday, Sept. 8.

A move is in store for the preschool, as staff and students anticipate relocating to the new Phillips County Event Center by the end of 2009.

Director Marcia Walter stressed that though the preschool is full for the year, she does maintain a waiting list and anyone interested in enrollment must call to be added. The preschool is state licensed and must adhere to regulations for enrollment which limit teacher-student ratio per daily session. Therefore it must enroll on a first-come, first-served basis.

Children ages 3 through pre-K who are not enrolled in kindergarten are eligible to enroll in the nonprofit, nonsectarian, nonpolitical preschool.

While Walter serves as the director of Dragon's Wagon, Joan Owens is assistant director and aides are Debbie Brandt and Holli Krueger.

The High Scope curriculum, an approved Colorado Department of Education curriculum, is used at the preschool and is highly regarded by Walter.

There will be two classrooms again this year, with 16 children in each during each session. Walter noted this allows teachers to meet Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) guidelines and serve the needs of the community.

Walter said the curriculum will be consistent for both classrooms in every session.

Preschool classes will be held Monday through Thursday with morning sessions from 9-11:30 a.m. and afternoon sessions from 1-3:30 p.m. Fridays will be staff inservice days.

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The Dragon's Wagon program consists of mixed-age groupings, which Walter said can be very beneficial. She cited the following benefits:

—provides a more normalized setting for early socialization and education.

—enhances opportunities for peer modeling and cooperative learning.

—gives parents more freedom with scheduling sessions for their child.

On Monday, Aug. 31, there will be a mandatory parents' meeting at the preschool.

Registration and enrollment forms, tuition payment procedures, parent handbook, daily schedule and the preschool's philosophy, curriculum and policies will be discussed with parents at that time.

Children will be able to visit the preschool during registration day Thursday, Sept. 3. Those who have children with last names starting with A-H will attend registration from 9-10 a.m.; I-P, 10-11 a.m.; Q-Z, 11-12; and those unable to come at their scheduled time should attend from noon-1 p.m.

Dragon's Wagon works closely with Northeast Colorado BOCES to assess children who may have special needs. Assessments are made in areas of speech and language, motor and cognitive development, with speech and occupational therapy provided on site if necessary.

Financial assistance information is available upon request by contacting the preschool at 854-2999.

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Members of the Dragon's Wagon advisory board are president Rena Schneller, vice-president Tracy Steggs, secretary Christy Shafer, co-treasurers Sarah Dille and Misty Hielscher, financial aide and GIFT Brooke Dirks and members Andrea Schlachter, Kari Sandquist and Karman Keith.